

**Frederick County Sustainability Commission**  
**Final Meeting Minutes (Adopted August 12, 2009)**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Meeting Room, Winchester Hall, 12 E. Church Street, Frederick, MD**  
**July 15, 2009**  
**3:00 pm**

**Present:** Don Briggs, Steve Chafitz, Annmarie Creamer, Sally Fulmer, Lisa Gaver, Mark Lancaster, Rich Maranto, Lisa Orr, Winifred Palmer, Kim Roberts, Fred Ugast, and Janice Wiles; Hilari Varnadore, staff

**Others present:** BOCC President Jan Gardner, BOCC Vice-President David Gray, Ron Hart (County Manager), Barry Stanton (Assistant County Manager), Tim Goodfellow (Planning Division), Heather Montgomery (DPW), and Jessica Stoner (MSD); and approximately fifteen citizens, including Graham Cullen and Karen Gardner (Frederick News Post), Leah and Tim Jones (Glory Energy), Alan Feinberg, Michael Gray, Nancy Lewis (Maryland Cooperative Extension), and Doug Mayles and Karrie Reckley from Fort Detrick. Staff recognizes that a sign in sheet at the door will be helpful at future meetings to capture audience attendance.

## **1. Welcome from County Commissioners Gardner and Gray**

Hilari Varnadore, Director of the Office of Environmental Sustainability, called the first meeting of the Sustainability Commission to order.

President Gardner thanked the members for serving the county and stated that there was more interest for the Commission than ever before. She said that environmental sustainability is a priority of the Board and that they would like to see the County be an environmental sustainability leader in Maryland and the country.

Commissioner Gray said that years ago he had the idea to start an environmental committee and was pleased to see the Commission come to be. He added that once the office was staffed in January, there was an immediate competition to locate the Clean Energy Center here. Commissioner Gray told the group that they were not on your ordinary committee; this Commission has a sense of urgency, purpose, and mission. He saw many opportunities for others to get involved and hoped that they engaged the citizenry. He thanked them for volunteering and said they were a committee that is going to go somewhere.

## **2. Announcements**

Ms. Varnadore went through several administrative items with the group. They reviewed information in their binders, reviewed a contact list and decided by consensus that the 3:00 p.m. meeting time worked for everyone's schedules. Ms. Varnadore agreed to follow-up using Doodle to poll the group on a suitable date to meet since Wednesday was not preferred by at least one member. Ms. Varnadore stated that elections and bylaw review would occur in August or early fall once the group was more familiar with one another. She reminded them to submit photos and bios to Fayne Lebherz and added that a group photo would be taken at the next meeting, if there would be 100% attendance.

### **3. Commissioner Introductions**

**Commissioners introduced themselves by sharing the three most important things they brought to the table.**

Fred Ugast:

- Experience planning and implementing new initiatives, primarily in business
- Solar energy expertise
- Financial impact of government policies

Sally Fulmer:

- Strong strategic planner; led budget/planning for Common Market expansion
- Working on MBA
- Passion for sustainability, grew up here, wants to see Frederick prosper

Steve Chafitz:

- 40 year resident
- Business background
- Electronic recycling business- familiar with commodities, recycling
- Strives to be up to date in regards to sustainability; current and up to date; international and US focus

Lisa Orr:

- Passion for energy conservation – household level
- Access to 300-400 agencies and volunteers
- Nonprofit expertise, make it happen

Mark Lancaster:

- Homebuilder for over 30 years, certified as a Green Builder last 4 years
- Energy efficient construction – new and existing homes

Don Briggs:

- Conservation experience, particularly involved in land preservation as Catoctin Land Trust founder, Board of Trustees member, Maryland Environmental Trust
- Interested in infill development; was involved in Patrick Center development
- Green Designation course instructor for National Association of Realtors and teaches a Green Appraisal course
- Appraiser/realtor

Lisa Gaver:

- Born and raised here
- Background in agriculture – involved in sustainability for lifetime
- Practice stewardship, conservation on farm
- Community volunteer – a “doer”

Kim Roberts:

- Owner of 3 small businesses , one is a web and graphic design/marketing company that specializes in conservation/nonprofits/green industry; she has through the years developed communication techniques that work for sustainability
- Wants to get the message out, make sustainable products and services available
- Student of Sustainable Design at Minneapolis School of Design
- Enthusiastic and brings comic relief

Rich Maranto:

- Small multi-media company in Middletown
- Passive solar house
- Training and communication background
- Activist – mdgoesgreen.com blog and Solar Tour involvement

Winifred Palmer, PhD:

- Living in the woods of Frederick County for over 40 years
- Expertise in toxicology

Janice Wiles:

- Executive Director of Friends of Frederick County
- Trained as a biologist, environmental scientist
- Worked for years in Brazil; started career there running eco-tours
- Desire in sustainable commerce – particularly agriculture

Annmarie Creamer:

- Passion for Frederick County, native to area
- Finishing Masters of Education with focus on experiential learning, group process, conflict resolution
- Works for Office of Recycling

Hilari Varnadore:

- Director of Office of Environmental Sustainability
- Long-range/comprehensive planning background –particularly water resources and municipal planning issues
- Executive Director of an area nonprofit – watershed conservation, sustainability issues (non-advocacy)
- 13<sup>th</sup> generation Marylander – committed to the state and region

**Commissioners shared the most important thing they wanted to get from participating on the Commission.**

Annmarie Creamer:

- Get involved in the community and build new relationships

Janice Wiles:

- Interested in agricultural viability
- Building relationships and working on issues that are important to her

Winnie Palmer:

- Didn't come to gain anything, rather hopes she has something to offer

Rich Maranto:

- Lower barriers to adoption of green building and renewable energy

Kim Roberts:

- Sense of accomplishment
- Work we do here comes to fruition

Lisa Gaver:

- Enhance viability and sustainability of ag community
- Bringing producer-level perspective to the table

Don Briggs

- Raise awareness of sustainability to the public
- Potable water important issue – recharge

Mark:

- Interested in learning about sustainability from a different mindset than as a builder
- He always has to make the case for sustainability from a financial aspect and is interested in learning from the activists at the table -- what is motivating people other than finances?

Lisa Orr:

- Part of a coordinated network, strategic, long-term

Steve

- Excited to work with doers at the table
- Committee benefits from his background, wants to contribute so county can move forward in a sustainable way

Sally

- Passion for agriculture, wants to see ag industry continue to prosper

Fred Ugast:

- Want to see us lead world to a better place
- Individuals can work together

Hilari Varnadore:

- Mentioned the support of the Board and that an employee-led Sustainable Action Team would start meeting soon to discuss internal sustainable practices

- Expressed that the group is comprised of doers and that she is excited to work with each of them as we move forward.

#### **4. Public Comment**

**Alan Feinberg** mentioned his involvement with East Frederick Rising and the Our CommonWEalth series. He said that he wants to bring people from outside in to stimulate conversation and people to talk with each other. He added that there is a group meeting at Café Nola on Thursday mornings and that all are welcome.

#### **5. Discussion of the Commission's Role**

Ms. Varnadore asked the group to break up into small three to four person groups to discuss how they saw the role of the commission, considering three questions – what is the commission's role overall? In relationship to the County Commissioners and County Manager? In relationship to the community? They reported back to the full group the following responses.

- Want to come up with “actionable” recommendations
- Want to be a sounding board to community ideas
- Evaluate and prioritize
- Provide education and communication
- Identify the roadblocks to sustainable practices
- Serve as a conduit between public and Commissioners
- Facilitate
- Diverse, cross section of community
- Prioritize issues
- Unifying force, serve as a central organizer for groups
- Enhance and promote sustainability throughout Frederick County
- Communicate
- Educate
- Motivate
- Engage
- Do some strategic planning - where are we now? Where do we want to be? How do we want to get there?
- Successes in other Counties across the U.S. and educate/inform the BOCC/County Manager on those successes
- Perform research – resources/grants that can help make it happen
- Bring initiatives to BOCC/Co. Manger for consideration or other way around
- Research – bring to BOCC/Co. Manger

Several questions followed in regard to the questions about “role.” First, Mr. Chafitz asked what kind of resources or support would be available to the Sustainability Commission. Ms. Varnadore reported that she plans on giving a general presentation at their August meeting about resources and the activities that are in progress related to sustainability in county government. She said that the Sustainability Office was placed in the County Manager's Office to have direct

access to the Board and Division Directors. Through this structure, she has the ability to communicate to them the Commission's needs and tap into the diversity of staff, technical, and other resources available at the County. She said that once the Commission develops a Sustainability Plan and identifies their strategy and work plan, they will have a better idea of what resources they will need. She and her staff will be available to assist the Commission in obtaining the resources they need to achieve the goals of the Plan.

Ms. Varnadore also updated the group on several grants that OES had applied for that could bring resources to the group. The Recovery Act – Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program would likely add a full-time, 3 year Sustainability Program Manager position to the office.

Mr. Chafitz asked what if they wanted to host an educational forum. Could they do that or did they need to run it through the County Commissioners or County Manager's office before they moved forward. Ms. Varnadore said that they will need to come to consensus on a general work plan over the next few months. Mr. Chafitz asked if the county would consider an intern to assist the Commission. Ms. Varnadore said yes, if that was a need expressed by the Commission to achieve their plan.

Ms. Roberts asked if Ms. Varnadore envisioned the Commission breaking out into sub-committees. Ms. Varnadore said that it was likely they would need to break out into groups further down the road to address the many issues that fall under sustainability, particularly in the development of a Sustainability Plan.

There was a discussion about whether the Commission brought information and ideas to the Board or if the relationship was the other way around. Barry Stanton, Assistant County Manager, told the group that they are the experts and that he had seen their resumes and knew that they had diverse and extensive experience in sustainability. He said that the Board will look to them for ideas and direction in regards to sustainability.

Ms. Varnadore told the group that they will need to decide what they want to achieve. What is the vision that they want to obtain? She said that she would lead them through a process to think big picture, then prioritize the actions and activities that will get them to their goal. At the end they can ask did we change anything and hopefully say yes.

## **6. What is Sustainability?**

The Commission broke into small groups again to discuss the meaning of sustainability. They reported back to the full group.

- People – planet – profit
- Triple bottom line
- Conserving resources
- Wise use
- Exploring alternatives
- Dependency issues
- Leaving things for those coming after us

- Three legged stool
- Environment – economics – society

Ms. Varnadore said that the list would be sent out to commissioners for further reflection and at some point they would be building on this work.

## **7. Closing Thoughts/Inspirations**

Ms. Varnadore reminded the group that she sits on a national committee that is developing a sustainable/livable communities rating system, similar to the US Green Building Council's LEED green building rating system. This work can provide a model and resources for Frederick County's process. The conveners of the STAR Community Index are ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, US Green Building Council, and the Center for American Progress.

Ms. Varnadore asked if anyone wanted to share something that they were taking away from the meeting. Ms. Varnadore said that she was really pleased to have the opportunity to work with all of them and is excited to learn more about them and what they can do as a collective group. She reminded them that the stars are aligned for sustainability efforts locally and nationally.

Lisa Orr expressed interest in setting up an online workspace to communicate. She was excited to learn about one another at the meeting and knew that they had much more to share between meetings. She thought they could share files and information about events too. Ms. Varnadore agreed to set up a Google Group for the Commission; the account would be by invite only to the Commission members at this point. They may decide to do other types of social marketing out to the public at a later date.

Ms. Varnadore said that she would use the Doodle online poll to pick an August meeting time.

## **8. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.